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## Epic Sharing within UC Health

### Campus collaborations allow for shared services, greater efficiencies

In an unprecedented move, UC San Diego Health and UCI Health have formed a strategic partnership to increase operational efficiencies and decrease patient care costs by sharing a single electronic medical records (EMR) platform.

The two academic health systems are now sharing a single instance of Epic, a secure cloud-based repository for patients' medical records. This is a first-of-its-kind technology collaboration within UC Health, and the first time that Epic has been extended from one academic medical center to another in the U.S.

"This groundbreaking collaboration aligns with the broader strategic goals of UC Health to share services and generate efficiencies across campuses through shared implementation and maintenance of technology platforms," said Christopher Longhurst, MD, chief information officer, UC San Diego Health. "Through this process, we've aligned our clinical pathways and practices to leverage the best of both organizations."

UC San Diego Health first implemented Epic in August 2005. UCI began using UC San Diego's instance of Epic in November 2017.

"By collaborating with UC San Diego, and leveraging its existing infrastructure, we have been able to avoid many of the start-up costs associated with implementing a new EMR application," said Chuck Podesta, chief information officer, UCI Health. "We foresee that the partnership will not only enable better management of medical information but will better support joint research efforts."



*Christopher Longhurst, MD, chief information officer, UC San Diego Health*

The shared Epic platform integrates the medical records from both UC San Diego Health and UCI Health, doubling the population served. Combined, the two organizations offer care to patients located in Imperial, San Diego, Riverside and Orange counties. The projected cost avoidance for implementation is estimated to be 30 percent.

The shared platform also involved a transition to a cloud-hosted environment for its medical records at Epic. A cloud-hosted environment helps the organizations to meet industry standards to safeguard patients' protected health information.

“This collaboration is a good example of how two health systems can leverage shared Epic technology for greater efficiencies and services, while still maintaining their independent organizational identities,” said Carl Dvorak, Epic president. “Working together, UC San Diego Health and UCI Health will continue leading the way in cost of care reduction, improved outcomes and a patient-focused experience.”

The idea behind the UC San Diego and UCI collaboration is part of a bigger movement in the health care community, known as “systemness.” Systemness is best described as combining assets and services to provide better and more efficient health care.



*Chuck Podesta, chief information officer, UCI Health*

“UC San Diego Health is always trying to modernize operations, so all clinicians can focus on what matters most — patient care. This collaboration further proves our commitment to that goal,” said Longhurst. “We expect to see increased opportunities for strategic innovation and scholarship, and to expand research, especially within population health.”

Full implementation of the shared Epic platform with UC Irvine Health began November 2017. UC San Diego Health also shares its instance of Epic with UCR Health clinics and community practice affiliates, a cost-saving arrangement that improves coordination of care among physicians.

According to Epic, the implementation took 17 months, significantly shorter than the average 24-month implementation observed at other academic health systems. The shorter implementation period will allow for patients and clinicians to begin fully utilizing and accessing shared patient information faster.

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